

## Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 ROME 00130

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, IT

SUBJ: THE SOCIALIST RATIONALE FOR A POLITICAL SHOWDOWN NOW --  
AN ANALYSIS

REF: ROME 0054

1. SOLID OPEN SUPPORT WHICH SOCIALIST (PSI) SECRETARY DEMARTINO'S INITIATIVE HAS RECEIVED ACROSS ENTIRE SPECTRUM OF PSI LEAVES LITTLE DOUBT THAT PARTY DIRECTORATE MEETING JANUARY 7-8 WILL FORMALIZE DECISION TO WITHDRAW ITS SUPPORT FROM THE GOVERNMENT. FORMER SOCIALIST MINISTER ZAGARI, WHO IN PREVIOUS RECENT MEETINGS HAD ALWAYS STATED HIS PERSONAL OPPOSITION TO AN IMMEDIATE GOVERNMENT CRISIS, CONFIRMED THIS TO EMBOFF TODAY. HE, AS ALL SOCIALIST SPOKESMEN, REFUSED TO PREDICT WHAT WOULD HAPPEN NEXT. SOCIALISTS MEANWHILE HEAVILY ENGAGED IN POLEMICS, ESPECIALLY WITH DC, PCI AND PRI, IN WHICH THEY CONFIRM THEIR POSITIONS, BUT INSIST THAT EARLY ELECTIONS NEED NOT BE THE END RESULT OF THEIR INITIATIVE. WHILE THEY ARE PUTTING FORTH A NUMBER OF GENERAL ECONOMIC DEMANDS, THEIR ESSENTIAL POINT IS POLITICAL. THEY INSIST ON THE OPEN  
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ASSOCIATION (IN SOME MANNER) OF THE PCI TO THE GOVERNMENT

MAJORITY. IF THIS DEMAND IS NOT MET, THEIR POLITICAL POSTURE WILL PROBABLY MAKE EARLY ELECTIONS INEVITABLE, AN OUTCOME THEY NOW SEEM TO CONSIDER A LESSER EVIL TO A CONTINUATION OF THE PRESENT SITUATION. WHILE THEIR DEMAND TO ASSOCIATE THE PCI TO THE MAJORITY WOULD APPEAR TO BE IN SUPPORT OF COMMUNIST OBJECTIVES, IN THE BYZANTINE WAY THE SOCIALISTS VIEW EVERYTHING, ESPECIALLY SINCE JUNE 15, IT IS NOT (FROM THEIR POINT OF VIEW). IT IS BASICALLY A MOVE AIMED IN NEAR PANIC AT THE PCI AS WELL AS THE DC, AND IN RIGOROUS CONFORMITY WITH THE SOCIALIST VIEW OF POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS, AT LEAST SINCE THE REFERENDUM.

2. THE FOLLOWING PARAGRAPHS SUMMARIZE, WITH ALL ITS SUICIDAL CONTRADICTIONS, THE PSI'S RATIONALE FOR ITS VIEWS. HOWEVER SUBJECT TO REFUTATION IT MAY BE IN DEBATE, IT MOTIVATES SOCIALIST ACTION, AND IS THEREFORE ESSENTIAL TO AN UNDERSTANDING OF THE DYNAMICS OF THE ITALIAN POLITICAL SITUATION.

3. THE SURPRISING (TO THEM) RESULTS OF THE DIVORCE REFERENDUM CONVINCED THE SOCIALISTS THAT, FOR THE FIRST TIME IN THIRTY YEARS, A TIDE WAS RUNNING LEFTWARD. IF SEIZED BY THE PSI, IT COULD RIDE THAT TIDE TO LEADERSHIP OF THE LEFT AND POLITICAL ACTION IN MORE COMPLETE HARMONY WITH ITS DEEPLY HELD MARXIST OUTLOOK. SINCE THE REFERENDUM, THE PSI'S OUTLOOK HAS BEEN ALMOST ENTIRELY ORIENTED TOWARD ELECTIONS, I.E., TOWARD BUILDING ITSELF INTO A WEIGHTIER COMPETITOR OF BOTH THE DC AND THE PCI. IN THE LAST GOVERNMENT CRISIS (FALL 1974) WHEN THE MORO-LAMALFA GOVERNMENT WAS FORMED, THE SOCIALISTS WERE IN FACT CLOSE TO GOING FOR BROKE BY OPTING FOR OPPOSITION AND PRECIPITATING EARLY ELECTIONS. MANCINI AND DE MARTINO PULLED THE SOCIALISTS BACK. THEIR UNIFYING LOGIC: BETTER TO AWAIT THE OUTCOME OF THE ALL-IMPORTANT REGIONAL ELECTIONS OF JUNE 1975 WHICH WERE LIKELY TO WEAKEN THE DC.

4. SOCIALIST AND COMMUNIST REGIONAL ELECTORAL STRATEGIES FOR THE JUNE 1975 ELECTIONS THUS RAN HAND-IN-HAND: BOTH AIMED TO CUT THE DC DOWN TO SIZE. BUT EVEN BEFORE THE ELECTIONS, THE PCI'S OBVIOUS PREFERENCE FOR ITS HISTORIC

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COMPROMISE STRATEGY BROUGHT THE PSI AND PCI INTO CONFLICT. SOCIALISTS WERE ESPECIALLY FURIOUS OVER THE PCI'S DOUBLE-CROSS ON THE FIGHT AGAINST NEW LAW AND ORDER MEASURES JUST BEFORE THE ELECTIONS. THE PCI OSTENSIBLY SUPPORTED THE PSI IN ITS OPPOSITION TO THEM WITHIN THE COALITION BUT ACCEPTED INFORMAL CONSULTATION ON THE MEASURES WITH MORO AT THE SAME TIME. THEN, WHEN THE PSI FOUND ITSELF COMPELLED BY ITS MAJORITY OBLIGATIONS TO VOTE THE

MEASURES, THE PCI VOTED AGAINST, THUS HAVING IT BOTH  
WAYS. THE PSI FELT IT HAD BEEN LEFT HOLDING THE ELEC-  
TORALLY EMPTY BAG BEFORE THE YOUNG LEFTIST VOTE.

5. TO THE SOCIALISTS, THE GENERAL LEFTWARD  
SHIFT IN THE REGIONAL ELECTIONS WAS NOT A SURPRISE, BUT  
THE FACT THAT THE PCI CAPTURED THE LION'S SHARE OF THE  
SHIFT WAS A BITTER DISAPPOINTMENT. THEY DREW ONE CLEAR  
CONCLUSION: THAT THE PCI HAD BEEN THE BIG WINNER BECAUSE  
THE PSI'S CONTINUED ASSOCIATION WITH THE DC HAD MADE IT  
LESS CREDIBLE AS THE LEADER OF THE LEFT (DESPITE A MORE  
BITTERLY ANTI-DC CAMPAIGN THAN THAT CONDUCTED BY THE PCI).  
AS A RESULT, ON THE LOCAL LEVEL THEY MOVED TO FAVOR PCI  
ENTRY INTO LOCAL GOVERNMENT WHEREVER POSSIBLE. BY THIS  
TACTIC THEY HOPED TO HOLD THEIR OWN ON THE LEFT UNTIL SUCH  
TIME AS THEY COULD REDRESS THE POWER BALANCE. (THEIR LOCAL  
EFFORT "TO OVERCOME THE PREJUDICIAL EXCLUSION OF THE PCI"  
HAD ALARMING SUCCESS, BRINGING ABOUT HALD OF THE  
ITALIAN PEOPLE UNDER LEFT-RUN LOCAL ADMINISTRATIONS.)

6. IN JULY THE PSI BEGAN TO LOOK FORWARD TO THE ALL-  
IMPORTANT NATIONAL ELECTIONS, SCHEDULED FOR JULY 1977.  
HAVING BEEN BURNED AS THEY THOUGHT BY ASSOCIATION WITH  
THE DC IN THE REGIONALS, AND UNWILLING TO ACCEPT AN  
IMMEDIATE SHOWDOWN BY PRECIPITATING EARLY NATIONAL  
ELECTIONS, THEY SAW ONE SOLUTION TO THE MAINTENANCE OF  
THEIR ELECTORAL CREDIBILITY: A DC MOVE LEFTWARD, AND  
THE OPEN ASSOCIATION OF THE COMMUNISTS TO THE NATIONAL  
MAJORITY, THUS DEPRIVING THE PCI OF THE "ADVANTAGES OF  
OPPOSITION," SO GREAT IN A TIME OF WEAK AND DISCREDITED  
GOVERNMENT. THE CRUCIAL CONDITION WAS THE LATTER. VOLPE

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FM AMEMBASSY ROME

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 ROME 00130

7. SINCE LAST JULY, THE POLITICAL IMPOSSIBILITY FOR THE DC TO ACCEPT THE LATTER CONDITION, THE PSI HAS EMERGED FROM EACH PARTY CONCLAVE WITH ITS SUPPORT FOR THE MORO-LAMALFA GOVERNMENT MORE ATTENUATED. IT THUS PROGRESSIVELY MOVED FROM PASSIVE SUPPORT IN JULY TO INFORMAL OPPOSITION IN DECEMBER (ROME 18228). MEANWHILE EVERY EFFORT IT HAS MADE TO FORCE ACCEPTANCE OF ITS CONDITION HAS GONE AWRY, AND HAD AN EVEN MORE ALARMING EFFECT FOR THE SOCIALISTS: PROGRESSIVE DC-PCI COOPERATION, "UNDER THE TABLE, AND OVER THE HEADS OF THE PSI," AS ONE JOURNALIST PUT IT. FOR AS THE SOCIALISTS CREATED SPACE BETWEEN THEMSELVES AND THE MORO-LAMALFA GOVERNMENT, THE COMMUNISTS HAVE MOVED INTO IT, ALL THE WHILE BEING CAREFUL TO MAINTAIN THEIR FORMAL COMMITMENT TO "CONSTRUCTIVE OPPOSITION." THE STAGE WAS THUS SET FOR THE EVENTS OF LAST WEEK AMID SOCIALIST PRE-CONGRESSIONAL FERMENT. AS REPORTED IN ROME 0054, THE ABORTION ISSUE PROVIDED THE LAST UNBEARABLE EXAMPLE OF DC-PCI COOPERATION "OVER THE HEADS" OF THE SOCIALISTS; AND THE GOVERNMENT'S END RUN AROUND THE PSI IN APPROVING ITS MEDIUM-TERM ECONOMIC PLAN, AND THE DECENTRALIZATION OF THE FUND FOR THE SOUTH, MADE THE CUP RUN OVER. THE  
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LATTER DEVELOPMENT ESPECIALLY REINFORCED PRESSURES WITHIN THE PARTY FOR IMMEDIATE WITHDRAWAL FROM THE GOVERNMENT BEYOND DEMARTINO'S ABILITY TO CONTAIN THEM (WITHOUT SPLITTING HIS CAREFULLY CULTIVATED UNANIMITY). FURTHER PRESS REPORTS AND EMBOFF CONTACTS WITH SOCIALISTS HAVE ESTABLISHED THAT DEMARTINO'S END-OF-YEAR BOMBSHELL CAME AS A SURPRISE EVEN TO HIS OPPOSITION WITHIN THE PARTY, AND CONFIRM THAT HE MADE THE DECISION ONLY AFTER DECEMBER 23 WHEN THE GOVERNMENT'S LEGISLATIVE PROPOSALS WERE APPROVED. WITH SOME BITTERNESS, DEMARTINO SPOKE IN HIS EDITORIAL OF THE DISDAIN SHOWN FOR SOCIALIST SUPPORT OF THE GOVERNMENT, AND FOR THE "POLITICAL (I.E., ELECTORAL) SACRIFICES" IT HAS MADE IN MAINTAINING IT.

8. THERE REMAINS THE QUESTION OF WHAT THE SOCIALISTS HOPE TO ACHIEVE BY ACTING AS THEY ARE. (THEY HAD ALREADY VIRTUALLY DECIDED TO PRECIPITATE THE SHOWDOWN AT THEIR CONGRESS IN EARLY FEBRUARY.) DEMARTINO'S DECISION TO

ANTICIPATE THE CONGRESS, WAS, AS ALREADY INDICATED, RECOGNITION THAT HE COULD NO LONGER CONTROL THE SITUATION WITHIN THE PARTY UNTIL THAT TIME, JEOPARDIZING BOTH PARTY UNITY AND HIS OWN LEADERSHIP. HE THUS CHOSE TO ACT NOW TO MAINTAIN BOTH. BEYOND THE TIMING, THE BASIC PSI OBJECTIVE IS ENTIRELY POLITICAL AND ELECTORAL IN INTENT: TO COMPEL THE DC AND PCI TO CHOOSE BETWEEN OPEN GOVERNMENT COLLABORATION AND OPEN OPPOSITION, FORECLOSING THAT THEY VIEW AS THE INSIDIOUS PROCESS OF "UNDER-THE-TABLE" INFORMAL COLLABORATION WHICH ACTUATES THE HISTORIC COMPROMISE AND LEAVES THE PSI OUT IN THE COLD. ELECTORALLY, THE PSI VIEWS THIS PROCESS AS ALLOWING THE PCI TO CONTINUE TO WORK BOTH SIDES OF THE STREET, GOVERNMENT OPPOSITION AND "RESPONSIBLE" COLLABORATION, GARNERING VOTES FROM BOTH SIDES. (THIS IS INDEED AN OLD SOCIALIST GAME WHICH THE PCI HAS TAKEN OVER.)

9. THERE CAN BE LITTLE DOUBT THAT THE PSI ITSELF VIEWS EARLY ELECTIONS AS THE MOST LIKELY OUTCOME OF ITS INITIATIVE, DESPITE ITS PROTESTIONS THAT IT NEED NOT LEAD TO THEM. (IT CAN HARDLY EXPECT THE DC TO ACCEDE TO ITS DEMAND AT THIS TIME, FOR ITS OWN ELECTORAL REASONS.) IT FOLLOWS THAT THE PSI HAS COME TO SEE EARLY ELECTIONS AS

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THE LESSER EVIL TO A CONTINUATION OF THE PRESENT SITUATION. EARLY ELECTIONS WILL, IN PSI'S VIEW, PRESENT PCI FROM CONTINUING TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF ITS PRESENT DUAL ROLE AND WILL ENABLE PSI TO TAKE A POSITION TO THE LEFT OF PCI'S PRESENT INFORMAL SUPPORT FOR DC/PRI GOVERNMENT. INDEED, IT WOULD SEEM THAT THE PCI IS BECOMING INCREASINGLY VULNERABLE TO DEFECTION OF THE YOUTH PROTEST VOTE BECAUSE OF ITS COOPERATION WITH THE GOVERNMENT. VOLPE

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